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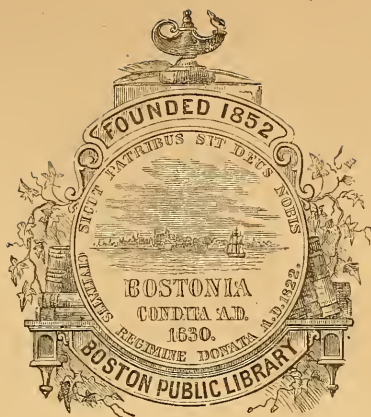
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CATALOGUED BY

REVISED BY

MEMORANDA.

d *Miss M. Abbott* 3

A

SERMON,

DELIVERED BY REQUEST OF THE

FEMALE CHARITABLE SOCIETY

3
10m
IN SALEM,

AT THEIR

ANNIVERSARY THE FIRST WEDNESDAY IN

AUGUST, A. D. 1815.

.....
BY MOSES STUART,

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF SACRED LITERATURE IN THE THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY, ANDOVER.

.....

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ANDOVER:

PRINTED BY FLAGG AND GOULD.

1815.

SERMON.

DEUTERONOMY xv. 11.

“FOR THE POOR SHALL NEVER CEASE OUT OF THE LAND: THEREFORE I COMMAND THEE, SAYING, THOU SHALT OPEN THINE HAND WIDE UNTO THY BROTHER, TO THY POOR, AND TO THY NEEDY IN THE LAND.”

THE duty of giving alms is plainly and positively enjoined, both in the Old Testament and the New. A neglect to discharge this duty is considered as evidence of great depravity. “If there be among you,” said God to his ancient people, “a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates, in thy land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not *harden thy heart*, nor shut thine hand, from thy poor brother.” “But whoso hath this world’s good,” saith an apostle, “and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?” (1 John iii. 17.)

A disregard to the wants of the poor is threatened with severe punishment. “Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard.” (Prov. xxi. 13.)

Charity to the poor is considered as an evidence of true benevolence, and the favour of God is promised to him who exercises it, in the manner which the Scriptures require. “He hath dispersed; he hath given to the poor; his righteousness endureth forever; his horn shall be exalted with honour.” (Ps. cxii. 9.) “God loveth a cheerful giver.” (2 Cor. ix. 7.) “Blessed is he that consid-

ereth the poor; the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble." (Ps. xli. 1.)

It cannot be said, that these injunctions and encouragements to give alms, respected only the people to whom they were originally delivered. The Jewish Church were informed, by our text, that *the poor should never cease out of the land*; and our blessed Saviour told his disciples, that *they should always have the poor with them.* (Matt. xxvi. 11.) While the reason of enjoining a duty exists, that duty is obligatory; and as the reason for giving charity will continue to the end of the world, the duty must be as lasting.

No principles in morals or religion are more plain, or less controverted, than these. A denial of them in theory, and especially in practice, would justly injure the character of any man, among all sober and enlightened communities.

But while the duty of charity to the poor has been extensively acknowledged, I think it will not be incorrect to say, that the apprehensions of many respecting it are very general and confused, and altogether inadequate to the importance of the subject. When the poor are starving, the duty of giving them food is obvious; when they are naked, they must be clothed; when they are sick, medicine and necessary aid must be supplied. But the common fact is, that when these immediate and pressing wants are relieved, they are left without any special attention, to pursue their accustomed course of conduct, until another exigency imperiously demands the interposition of the charitable.

Most men, most Christians, seem to satisfy themselves with this course of beneficence. But it appears very questionable, whether this does not fall far short of what might be and ought to be done, for the effectual relief of the indigent class of society.

Though our text, and many other passages of Scripture, appear at first view to speak of charity, according to the common acceptance of that term in reference to the subject before us, yet I apprehend the spirit of these precepts is justly capable of a much more extensive application. Certainly a command to relieve the wants and mitigate the woes of the poor, implies an obligation on our part to use the most effectual means in our power, for the accomplishment of this purpose.

My principal object in this discourse is, *to point out what those means are, and to discuss their practicability and importance.*

Man is possessed of two natures; a spiritual and immortal nature like that of angels, and a corporeal, material one, in common with animals. From this structure it results, that his wants and woes are of two different kinds: the one class respect his soul, the other his body.

It is obvious, therefore, that the charity which provides for only one class of these wants is inadequate. He, that *opens his hand wide unto his brother*, will do something for the supply of *both*.

I take it for granted, that there is no need of pressing upon this audience, the imperious duty of supplying those who are famishing with food, the naked with clothing, and the sick with every necessary aid. I shall call their attention, therefore, to other duties of charity, which, although they are not in every case immediately directed to the relief of wants already existing and urgent, are highly important to prevent the existence of such wants.

These duties respecting the indigent may be divided into two great classes. The first respects the welfare of their souls, and consists in *giving them moral and religious instruction*. The second respects provision for their support, and consists in *training them up to habits of industry and economy, and furnishing them with employ-*

ment, by means of which they may regularly acquire the means of subsistence.

It will readily be perceived, that what I am going to say, peculiarly respects indigent children and young persons. Many, who are more advanced in life, and have formed idle and vicious habits, which have always kept them in a state of beggary, would in all probability profit much less than the young, by the means of relief at which I have just hinted.

I. *It is our duty to assist the indigent, by giving them moral and religious instruction.*

It is unnecessary for me to bring forward a laboured series of arguments, to establish the truth of this general proposition before this audience. Admitting the immortality of the soul, a future state of rewards and punishments, and that our eternal destiny is essentially connected with our moral and religious conduct here; the importance of such instruction as may enlighten those who are ignorant of their duty, and reclaim those who are wandering from it, is unspeakably great. I do not affirm this, because I believe that any instruction will of itself eradicate the native depravity of the human heart, which is common to all ranks in society. No; the same Omnipotence which created us from the dust, with powers and faculties fitted for the station which we occupy in this lower world, must create us anew to fit us for residence in a world of perfect purity and glory. But that Omnipotence, ever since this creation was called into existence from nothing, usually operates by means; and often by such means, as plainly appear to us fitted to accomplish the end for which they are used. In reconciling sinners to himself, God employs a great variety of means. The instruction of which we speak, is one of the most obvious, and most important.

Nor is it in view of immortality alone, that moral and

religious instruction appears important. If our expectation of a future state of rewards and punishments be all a dream, it is of great importance to the welfare of society in general, and to the indigent themselves, that they should be well instructed in good principles. If there be no God, a virtuous and pious course of life is far more effectual in securing our happiness here, than the opposite course. It will not be questioned, that the peace and welfare of society are most intimately connected with morality and religion.

The correctness of these principles may be admitted by many, who may still be disposed to ask, whether *much*, or whether *sufficient* be not already done in our country, and in this State, for the instruction of the poor.

It is with great pleasure that I can say, if the information which we have received from all quarters be correct, no country on earth bestows so much pains in educating the poor as our own; particularly does this remark apply to New England. But that enough is yet done to discharge our duty in this most important business, is, in my apprehension, far from being true.

Any man, who is conversant with the indigent class of society, knows that many of them are still deplorably ignorant. Not only is this the fact, but from habit, and an aversion to any mental efforts, they are unwilling to be taught, or feel no interest in it. How difficult it is to reclaim such from their vicious courses, or to gain access to their understandings, and in not a few instances to their consciences, every one knows who has made the trial. These observations will not, however, apply particularly to indigent children and youth. At that period of life, there usually exists in them a great desire to be instructed; or if that desire does not already exist, it is in general easily excited.

It is not to be expected that very much can be effected,

by efforts made to instruct the poor and ignorant, who are far advanced in life, and whose habits are completely formed. The grand effort is to be made upon the young. It is of immense importance that this should be vigorously and effectually made. Though the poor are less numerous in our country than in any other, they still constitute a part of society by no means inconsiderable. It is of great moment, that they should be early imbued with correct principles. In case they never become real Christians, such principles will generally make them better members of society than they otherwise would be. God employs moral and religious instruction in early life, as a check to the career of sinners, and a scourge to their consciences, when they violate his laws.

Admitting the correctness of these remarks, let the question be put; Are our indigent children and youth all furnished with such means of religious and moral instruction, as their own usefulness, the interests of society, and the welfare of immortal souls demand? Have our hands been *opened wide* to all the needy of our land, who are perishing for lack of vision, and who are growing up ignorant of their God, their duty, and themselves? We must answer in the negative. And if any one be dissatisfied with the answer, let him visit the dwellings of the needy and inquire for himself. Let him be faithful and persevering in this office, and I must believe his convictions will, in the result, agree with the statement which has been made.

One State, and one only, has carried the system of instructing the poor almost to the degree of perfection, of which as a public measure it may perhaps be susceptible. That State pays annually, for such instruction, two thousand dollars more than all the money, which is gathered into its Treasury by taxation. After all, much remains to be done even *there*, by private and individual exertion.*

* The State referred to is Connecticut. The annual sums expended on the education of youth in that State are constantly increasing.

If this be the fact, surely there is more need among us of private exertions, since public aid is far less adequate to this great object.

Nor is it by any means sufficient that money should be liberally appropriated to procure instruction for the poor. Great care and vigilance are necessary to direct the specific appropriations of public or private liberality. The instructors employed by it, should be persons possessed of moral and religious principles, which are truly good.

If it be of great importance to children to be brought up by pious parents, it is of similar importance to them to be under the care of pious and virtuous instructors. Money appropriated to hire those of an opposite character is worse than squandered. It is in vain for the charitable to enlarge their bounty, if its appropriation is not watched over, with a most anxious and scrutinizing eye. It will, otherwise, prove a curse instead of a blessing, to the objects for whom it is designed.

To regulate schools for instructing the poor, it is important that they should be regularly visited by competent persons, and the whole method of instruction in religion, morals, and manners critically inspected. Such a practice encourages both the teacher and his pupils, if he be a conscientious and faithful man; and will correct him if he may have been faulty. There should not be, as is too commonly the case, any remission of these duties on the part of the visitors. They should be punctual, thorough, and persevering. Such a course will be productive of many good effects.

Nor is the duty of instructing the poor discharged, merely by giving them the advantages of a common education at school. Books of moral and religious instruction should be given them. A very happy expedient has been adopted of late to furnish them with books at an easy and cheap rate. I refer to the publication of religious Tracts.

Experience has shewn that they can be afforded at a very low price, and that they are productive of much good. Many will read a Tract when given to them, who would not, perhaps could not, purchase it. It is a method of disseminating instruction calculated to interest the feelings of the poor ; and to those who engage in this kind of charity, it is less laborious and less difficult, than any other charity which requires active exertion.

Such are some of the duties, which respect the moral and religious instruction of the indigent. If we *open our hand wide to the needy*, much more remains to be done, in this respect. Are there not thousands still in New England, are there not many in this town, who are exceedingly deficient in moral and religious knowledge?—Are not the seeds of death thus cherished in the very bosom of our country? By whom has every free government been overturned, in every age that is past? By the ignorant and unprincipled, led on by aspiring and factious men. Let *all* our children be well instructed in good principles, and such men can raise no mobs, nor arm any factions against their country. A people enlightened without exception, in the great principles of the gospel, and whose consciences had been made tender in their childhood by the repeated application of religious truths, would bid defiance to the arts of demagogues and usurpers, and firmly and unitedly support any government which is free and rationally administered.

And to those whose hearts melt, at the remembrance of his love, who left the bosom of the Father to agonize upon the cross that he might redeem his enemies from destruction by his own precious blood, and whose gospel, designed from the beginning to be *preached to the poor*, shines in this respect as in every other with a glory which infinitely surpasses that of all the wisdom of casuists and philosophers,—to those whose breasts heave at the recol-

lection of this, need I say, *open thy hand wide to the needy, who are perishing for lack of vision, and who in the midst of Sabbaths and sacraments, and all the means of grace, and among the professed disciples of Christ, are without God and without hope in the world?*

II. I pass on to consider, as was proposed, a *second duty to the poor; which consists in training them up to habits of industry and economy, and furnishing them with employment, by means of which they may regularly acquire the means of subsistence.*

Even the benefits of a moral and religious education will in most instances be lost, unless this be done. Man is fitted for activity. Almost all men will be active. If they are not doing something that is good and useful, they will be doing evil.

The common observation, that idleness is the floodgate to every vice, has much of truth in it. There is no class of men so pernicious to society, and none so dangerous, as those who have no regular and useful employment. Gambling, drunkenness, quarrelling, profanity, cheating, theft, and such like vices, are the usual concomitants of idleness.

It is of incalculable importance to society, to guard against the existence of this evil. Experience teaches, that although the necessities of the poor would seem imperiously to demand their unremitting exertions, yet they are not less apt to lie idle than any other portion of the community. What can be done to remedy this evil?

Much I apprehend can be, and ought to be done, which has hitherto been generally neglected.

1. *All indigent children and youth should be taught how to work.*

There are many parents who are unable, and some who are unwilling, to teach their children how to work. In such cases, it becomes the duty of society, on the principle of self-preservation, as well as from benevolence to

the individuals concerned, to take them out of the hands of such parents, and place them in a station where they will be taught to labour.

It is not enough, that they be employed in some of the most plain and easy kinds of work, which children may do without any special instruction. As soon as they are capable of it, they should be placed at diverse and regular trades. All the different mechanics and artificers needed in society may be thus formed; and that portion of the poor, which is needed for the common and numerous offices of daily labour, should be taught how to perform it with fidelity and despatch.

This is a point of vastly more importance than is generally imagined. If the indigent youth grow up, untaught in the various arts in which they might be employed, and consequently unskilled in them, who will employ them? Who is willing to have his work done unfaithfully and unskilfully? On the other hand, a good workman, whatever be his business, always finds sufficient employment, and will generally find a prompt and ample compensation for his labours.

2. *Indigent children and youth should be trained up to habits of industry.*

Let a man possess ever so much skill in labour, if he be disgusted with employment, and disposed to engage in it but seldom, he will inevitably plunge himself and his family into all the evils of penury. Many of the indigent are trained up now to an irregular course of life. They sometimes labour and sometimes are idle. Thus from childhood they are brought up to feel, that such a method of spending time is proper and even necessary to their comfort; and when they have advanced in years, an effort on the part of others to alter this course, would be regarded by them as inhumanity and oppression.

Experience however demonstrates, that no class of the

indigent are so happy, as those who are constantly employed. Perhaps no class of society enjoy as much contentment as they. Certainly they are altogether more happy, more respectable, and more useful to the community, than they would be, should they spend their time in alternate successions of labour and idleness.

The only successful method of forming habits of industry is, to begin the work in childhood. Let children feel from the first dawnings of reason, that continual employment in something that is useful, is not only a duty in a moral and religious respect, but absolutely essential to form a wholesome member of the community or to be respectable among men. This instruction should by no means be confined to theory. Your practical treatment of them should be adapted to make them feel the correctness of these sentiments. Not a day should ever pass, seasons of religious worship excepted, when they should not be either acquiring useful knowledge, or labouring. And even on the Sabbath, they should never be permitted to be idle. They should rest indeed from the common employments of the world, but they should be employed in gaining something that is useful to their souls. It is a point of great magnitude, that their instruction respecting the proper manner of spending the Sabbath should be early and effectual. The apprehension that the Sabbath may be spent as a day of idleness leads multitudes to habits which eventually ruin both soul and body.

If there be any one point which is of preeminent importance respecting the general subject before us, it is the point under consideration. Complaint is often made against the poor, that they are idle. With respect to many there is, no doubt, sufficient ground to support such a complaint. But how many are there, who in being idle only follow the habits which they have contracted from their very childhood. They have never been taught to

love labour, but to view it as a necessary evil, to be endured only when they are absolutely compelled to endure it.

Besides, the poor are sometimes blamed for being idle, when they have no employment. Those who are but very moderately skilled in labour will, at certain seasons of the year, be for some days destitute of employment. How important is it, that those who reproach them for idleness, should actively engage in the benevolent object of finding them something to do. This is the grand secret of making them useful and happy. Let them feel, from their childhood, that it is exceedingly disreputable to be out of employ—to spend one day in an idle manner; and there is little danger, but with a moderate share of economy, they will usually possess enough by the time they are forty years of age, to place them beyond the reach of mendicity.

3. *Indigent children and youth should be trained up to habits of economy.*

So far as respects competent means of providing for families, this is absolutely indispensable. Experience demonstrates that it is the greatest of all means in securing a competence. Let two men perform the same quantity of labour, for twenty years together, and let the one have a good practical knowledge of living economically, and the other be destitute of that knowledge, supposing them both equally desirous of thriving, the former will at the end of that period be in comfortable circumstances, and the latter a beggar, on every emergency.

There are many, very many, savings of property, in food, in fuel, in clothing, and other necessaries and conveniences, of which many of the indigent are ignorant. It is important that a knowledge of such savings, as are practicable for them, should be communicated to them in the early part of life. Let them be scrupulously watched over, during this season, in all their expenditures; and

when they mis-spend, let them be instructed how they could have done better, and how important it is to them, that they should be well acquainted with the art of economy.

One thing is almost certain. That class of the poor who labour only a part of the time, will frequently contract habits of wasting a great part of their earnings in the purchase of articles, which are very injurious to their health and morals. It is of the highest importance to economy, not only that the labourer be daily employed and acquiring something, but that he be not subjected to the great temptations into which intervals of idleness will always cast him.

In a country like ours, where the wages of the labourer are higher, in proportion to the price which he must pay for the necessaries of living, than among any other nation; a poor man who is blessed with the common health of the industrious, if he be instructed how to labour in the best manner, if he be diligent and unremitting in his exertions, and economical in all his management, can scarcely fail, unless assailed by peculiar misfortunes, of laying up a property which shall place him above mendicity, and provide for the season of old age.

The obvious advantages of such a scheme of charity to the poor, as I have been describing, may be summed up in a few words.

1. The moral and religious state of the poor, would be greatly meliorated. A multitude of crimes would be prevented, by the effect which pious instruction will produce on the consciences of the young; an effect which nothing but uncommon depravity can efface. Many too through the medium of such instruction might be led to the knowledge of God, and to secure their endless happiness beyond the grave.

2. Such a course of instruction and discipline would

greatly add to the happiness of the poor in this world, because it would contribute to save them from those vices which are inevitably followed by misery ; it would also increase their respectability and importance in society.

3. Its advantages would not be confined to the poor : Society would be saved, by such a course of charity, from a great multitude of depredations, which it now suffers from the idle and profligate, who prey upon it to obtain the means of subsistence.

4. A large portion of that property which is now given to maintain mendicants, and such indigent persons as by their vices have incapacitated themselves to labour, would be saved, and might be appropriated to very important purposes.

The grand object to be accomplished by that scheme of charity, of which I have been speaking is, to diminish the number, and the exigencies of the poor ; to enable them to provide for themselves, instead of being cast upon the mercy of others. How much happier, more contented, and more useful would they be !

I am not however so sanguine in the theory which I have advanced, as to suppose it capable of being carried so perfectly into execution, as in every case to prevent the existence of poverty among us. The voice of inspiration has told us, that *the poor shall never cease from the land*, and he who often abode with them, the Lord of glory in the form of a servant, has told us ; *The poor ye have always with you*. Not a few will be kept in a state of penury by sickness—many will be reduced to it by misfortunes, and accidents which incapacitate them to labour. Some families will be so numerous that assistance from charity will be needed, be the parents ever so industrious. The charitable will always find opportunity for the exercise of their beneficence. But every benevolent mind will perceive it to be desirable, that multitudes who are

reduced to beggary by idle and profligate lives, and who swallow up a great portion of the alms to the poor, should be put in the way, (at least that their children should be taught,) to maintain themselves. All this expense might be saved and devoted to other great objects.

But admitting the importance of what has been said ; admitting also, that too little is done in our State to prepare the poor for usefulness and happiness ; the question may be asked, and it should be answered, What practicable method of doing more than is already done, can you point out ?

In England, the subject of educating the poor has, of late, received great attention. Mr. Joseph Lancaster has devised and successfully executed the plan of a school, in which great numbers may be taught at a small expense. It is unnecessary for me to detail his method here, as the book which describes it is common, and may be purchased by every individual who takes an interest in this important subject. Suffice it to say, that he has demonstrated by experience, that a *thousand* scholars may be taught by *one* instructor, for a year, with the expense, including all their tuition, books, fuel, room rent, and other little matters, of only 300l. sterling ; which is \$1,33 of our money, for each scholar. Schools on the same plan, have been successfully instituted at New York, Philadelphia, Hartford in Connecticut, and other places. The discovery is in my apprehension of incalculable consequence to the indigent.

As an antidote to the fears of those, who are apprehensive lest the poor may know too much, (if there be any such in this audience,) and also to confirm the statements which have been made in this discourse, permit me to mention two remarkable and well attested facts. Mr. Raikes, whose benevolence is well known in England, has stated, that during a period of twenty years, which had elapsed since the

establishment of Sunday Schools at Gloucester, about three thousand children have received education there; and that, though he has regularly visited the county and city gaols, he has met, during that period, with *one instance only of criminality*, in any of those three thousand persons. In like manner, Mr. Lancaster has never yet had occasion to learn, that any one of the four thousand children whom he has educated at the borough-school, (though taken from the lowest classes of society,) has been charged in a court of justice, with any offence.*

If with a school, like that of Mr. Lancaster, communicating the common instruction from books, could be connected a school to teach labour and economy, it would accomplish the great objects, which I have been discussing.

One object of the Society, who this day solicit your charitable aid, is to conduct a school in miniature on this principle. Female orphan children from three to ten years of age, whose parents are not capable of supporting them, are the objects of their charitable exertions; and these are to be “taught reading, writing, and all kinds of domestic business, until old enough to be placed in reputable families.” To this important branch of beneficence, the Society have added another no less creditable to their charity and interesting to the cause of humanity; that of aiding “infirm and aged widows, who by misfortunes have fallen into poverty and distress.”

It is now thirteen years since this Society was instituted, during which time it has had under its care forty one children, and assisted about 447 widows. The demand which is constantly made for the services of the children, who are dismissed from their care, is the best proof how the public estimate their labours, and what advantages the children acquire under their direction. Not to mention how much good has been done, by their timely and

* Edinb. Review, No. xxxiii. p. 66.

charitable aid of distressed widows, let it be inquired what would in all probability have become of most of these orphan children, if they had not been taken up by them and educated for usefulness? From whom do crimes which stain the land with disgrace, or with blood, commonly originate? Most commonly from those who are without any knowledge of God and of religious obligation, and who have been suffered to grow up, entirely neglected as to all mental cultivation, and in ignorance of any honest occupation, by which they might acquire their subsistence. The individual, or the society, who regularly educates one poor child, and directs it in the path of industry, not only does an act of great kindness to the child, but to society at large. If a firebrand is not quenched which already threatens destruction, it is at least prevented from kindling; and this is hardly a less good than the other.

I am aware, that persons whose opinions are in general entitled to respect, have felt some objections to charitable societies being managed by females. But these objections will hardly bear the test of fair examination. So far as it respects the management of funds, the aid of men who are skilled in these matters, can always be easily procured. As it respects the active duties of charity; the finding out of proper objects; the estimation of their wants, and the distribution of aid; it cannot be denied by any impartial man, that females are peculiarly fitted for these offices. Without subjecting myself, before this audience, to a charge of designing to exaggerate or to flatter, I may be permitted to say, that women possess more patience, more acute and tender sympathy for distress, more persevering diligence under the ordinary discouragements which charitable efforts must encounter, than men. Let me ask; who watch over our beds of sickness, and cheerfully perform the tender offices which alleviate despondency and distress? Who anticipate our wants,

and provide for a thousand exigencies, of which men would be unmindful? And if we appeal to the word of God for examples to illustrate the position laid down—to whom was the prophet of God sent, after the ravens ceased to provide for him? Whose sympathy led them to linger around the judgment hall of Pilate, when all the apostles had fled, and left their divine Master in the hands of his enraged accusers? Who watched the place where the crucified Saviour was laid, and repaired to it early in the morning, when he arose and left the dead? My audience have anticipated the answer; and in doing this have furnished a proof of what I have been asserting, respecting the peculiar fitness of females to direct the labours and the gifts of charity; to “visit the fatherless and widows in affliction.”

Let it ever be remembered, that the holy apostle has joined these two things together, as constituting a peculiar and prominent feature of religion. “Pure religion,” says he, “and undefiled before God and the Father is this; To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction.” I appeal to those, who have been peculiarly engaged in this business, whether they have not derived a satisfaction from it, which no round of fashionable amusements or circles of gaiety ever imparted? It has pleased God to reward obedience to his injunctions, even in this present state, with a pleasure superior to that which the mere worldling ever feels. The Saviour of men “went about doing good.” He was active in his beneficence. Is there a more delightful employment, than to imitate him? The poor you have always with you; and therefore, room may always be found to be engaged in the delightful employments of beneficence.

Shall it be said, that charitable societies encourage indolence in the poor? If this Society, who plead for your charity to day, act agreeably to the express design of their

institution, this objection, allowing its validity, will not affect them. It is unfortunate widows, and orphan children whom they design to aid. The fact is, that every thing must depend on the discretion with which charity is bestowed. It must be allowed, that charity may be so injudiciously applied, as to do more hurt than good, by encouraging idleness and inattention to business. But it need not be so bestowed : it will not be, under the management of prudent persons.

In truth, where the objection in question is once brought forward as the result of deliberate conviction, it is a hundred times adduced to cover a niggardly spirit—an unwillingness to give. It is indeed a veil so thin, as not to conceal from any eyes the deformity which it is designed to hide.

There are some, who will probably say, that the object of the Female Charitable Society is good, but they prefer being the distributors of their own bounty. To such I would say, that the good done by systematic and united exertion, is vastly greater than can be done by charity at random. Undoubtedly private beneficence should not be superseded ; but where persons make it a business to manage charitable concerns, they accomplish more and do it more judiciously than others who are not thus occupied.

If there be any present, who have never taken any special interest in the Society in question, may I be indulged in soliciting them to examine the nature and design of it ; to look at the good it has already done and promises to do, and to unite their zealous exertions with those who have already so laudably come forward in this important work. They will certainly enjoy a pleasure from such beneficence, which none of the dull round of amusements ever communicated. God has enstamped the virtues which he commands, with the image of their heavenly

origin. The pleasure they give is divine—the world cannot give it—the world cannot take it away.

The return of peace to our country has increased the ability of the charitable—of all classes in society. The hopes of the Society, in whose behalf I appear to day, are animated by this circumstance. The widows and orphans which the war has made, make no small addition to the demands of charity ; and to you the appeal is made, whether those who plead for them shall be sent away empty handed ! Whether you approve or condemn the war, the widows and the orphans made by it have the same claims for pity and compassion. The Charitable Society indulge the hope, that the news of this day's beneficence will brighten many countenances now suffused with tears, and cause the heart of the widow to rejoice. You will not disappoint their benevolent hopes ; you will send them with joyful messages to the houses of indigence and distress—and may God Almighty reward your beneficence a thousand fold ; AMEN.

AN ACCOUNT

OF THE

“SALEM FEMALE CHARITABLE SOCIETY.”

AT Salem, on the 1st of July, 1801, several ladies, to whom the subject had been mentioned, met to consider the benefits which would arise from the establishment of a Charitable Society to be conducted only by females. Upon a determination to form such a society, the proper objects of it were considered. These were thought to be, *des-titute female orphans*, or children whose parents were incapable of supporting them; and *infirm and indigent widows*.

The children, from three to ten years of age, were to be placed under the care of a Governess, who would instruct them in every thing which would prepare them for domestic usefulness, educate them in habits of industry and economy, and seek to impress their young minds with a sense of their moral and religious obligations. The widows were to be relieved annually from a fund for that purpose.

On the 25th of July, 1801, the Committee, appointed to report rules and laws for the Society, met the subscribers, and their report was unanimously accepted. The plan of the association has been published.

After this organization, the members made choice of a first and second Directress, Secretary, Treasurer, and eight Managers; being the different officers required by the laws.

STATE OF THE SOCIETY AT THE CLOSE OF THE FIRST YEAR,
APRIL 6, 1802.

Number of members at the first subscription	-	144
Members admitted in the course of the year	-	2
Whole number	- - - -	146
Annual subscription, at three dollars	- -	\$438
Donations from members	- - - -	28
Interest of money received	- - - -	6 34
Total amount of stock	- - - -	\$672 34
Expenses for six children, under the care of the Society		\$223 23
Stock on hand at the close of the first year	- -	449 11

Donations, the first year, in Goods.

From a gentleman, one piece of cotton cloth.

From several ladies, six pieces of ditto.

Whole containing 101 yards:

In this year five members deceased, and four ceased so be subscribers.

At the annual meeting, April 7, 1802, were presented

Donations from two gentlemen	-	-	-	-	\$20
From two female friends	-	-	-	-	20
The bequest of a member	-	-	-	-	50
					<u>\$90</u>

STATE OF THE SOCIETY AT THE CLOSE OF THE SECOND YEAR,
APRIL 6, 1803.

Whole number of members		162	
New members	-	-	13
Stock on hand	-	-	\$645 82
Amount of annual subscription	-	-	486
Donations from members	-	-	127 62
Public contribution, July 6, in the First Church			315 15
From a person unknown	-	-	20
From a gentleman	-	-	10
			<u>\$1604 59</u>
Placed at interest	-	-	\$1000
Remaining in the Treasury	-	-	604 59
			<u>\$1604 59</u>

Donations in Goods.

Two pieces striped blue cloth.

Three pieces of white goods, the whole containing 56 yards.

Various articles of Clothing for the children.

During the year, three children were added to the number of those under the protection of the Society. One child was placed at service, and one member deceased.

STATE OF THE SOCIETY AT THE END OF THE THIRD YEAR,
APRIL 2, 1804.

Whole number of members		163	
New members	-	-	14
Stock on hand	-	-	\$645 95
Amount of annual subscription	-	-	489
Donations from members	-	-	156 22
Bequest from Mrs. Sarah Fisk, late first Directress			30
From a person unknown, residing in Boston, for the purpose of immediate distribution among aged widows	-	-	75
Donations from gentlemen	-	-	69 75
Amount of interest	-	-	40 75
Balance of sundry accounts	-	-	17 13
			<u>\$1838 95</u>

Donations in Goods.

Thirteen pieces of cloth, containing $151\frac{1}{2}$ yards.

Four children have been received, and two placed at service.

At the annual meeting, April 4, 1804, the Society passed a unanimous vote, that, in order to render their proceedings more valid, they petition the General Court, at their next session, to grant them an act of Incorporation; which was accordingly obtained June 23, 1804.

*STATE OF THE SOCIETY AT THE CLOSE OF THE FOURTH YEAR,
APRIL 29, 1805.*

Whole number of members	200
New members	28
Amount of annual subscription	\$569
Donations from members	150 $42\frac{1}{2}$
Subscribed towards purchasing a house for the children under the care of the Society	669
Collected after the annual sermon	242 99
Donation from a gentleman	30
Interest money received	85 25
	<hr/>
	\$1746 $66\frac{1}{2}$

Four children were received into the Asylum, during the year, and five were placed at service. Two members discontinued their subscription.

*STATE OF THE SOCIETY AT THE CLOSE OF THE FIFTH YEAR,
MAY 5, 1806.*

Number of subscribers	182
New members	7
Amount of annual subscription	\$554
Donations from members	87 $29\frac{1}{2}$
Collected by a public contribution	156 $48\frac{1}{2}$
Amount of interest	79
Donations from gentlemen	17
	<hr/>
	\$894 78

The funds of the Society, this year, were

Eight shares in Salem Bank, valued at	\$920
Five shares in Marine Stock,	400
One Note for	200
One ditto for	300
One ditto for	400

All at six per cent interest. One child was received under the protection of the Society, and one placed at service. Six subscribers discontinued, and four deceased.

STATE OF THE SOCIETY AT THE CLOSE OF THE SIXTH YEAR,
MAY 4, 1807.

Amount of annual subscription	-	-	-	\$537	30
Donations from members	-	-	-	92	30
Collected at the public contribution	-	-	-	149	72
Arising from the sale of the sermons	-	-	-	41	67

\$820 99

Expenses of the Society during the year were	\$633	83
Interest arising from the widows' fund	-	104
Distributed among thirty two destitute females	91	
Remaining on hand	-	13

Six members deceased, and six discontinued their subscription.

Three children were placed at service, and three were received into the Asylum.

State of the Widows' Fund.

Five shares in the Union Marine Insurance Office, cost	\$400
Eight shares in Salem Bank, cost	920
One Debenture Bond, payable Aug. 26, cost	234 18
Two ditto payable in May and July, cost	150 45
Remaining in the Treasury	167 16

\$1871 79

Sum subscribed for a house	\$699
Collected	689
Interest arising from part of it	16

\$705

Placed in the following manner.

One note of hand, for	\$300
One ditto	200
One ditto	100
Two Debenture Bonds, payable in June and Sept.	105 36

\$705 36

STATE OF THE SOCIETY AT THE CLOSE OF THE SEVENTH YEAR,
APRIL 18, 1808.

Amount of annual subscription	-	-	-	\$501
Donations from members	-	-	-	68 42
Collected at the public contribution	-	-	-	164
Amount of the sale of the sermons	-	-	-	33

\$766 42

Expenses of the Society, during the year, were	\$642	40
Interest arising from the widows' fund	-	129 82
Distributed among thirty four destitute females	95	
Remaining on hand	-	34 82

Three members deceased, and eight discontinued their subscription. Four children were placed at service, and three received into the Asylum.

State of the Widows' Fund.

Eight shares in Salem Bank	-	-	-	-	\$920
Five shares in Union Marine Office	-	-	-	-	400
Lent to the Salem Iron Factory Company	-	-	-	-	115
Remaining in the Treasury	-	-	-	-	202
					<hr/>
					\$1637

Fund for a House.

One note of hand for	-	-	-	-	\$300
One ditto for	-	-	-	-	200
One ditto for	-	-	-	-	100
Cash lent to Salem Iron Factory Company	-	-	-	-	108
					<hr/>
					\$708

In August, 1808, the Society were enabled, by the liberality of the gentlemen of Salem, to purchase a house for the reception of the children under their care, for which the sum of sixteen hundred dollars was paid; and they would embrace this opportunity of renewedly expressing their obligations to those persons to whose generosity they were then so much indebted.

*STATE OF THE SOCIETY AT THE CLOSE OF THE EIGHTH YEAR,
MAY 1, 1808.*

New subscribers	23	Discontinued	-	4
Deceased	-	Whole number	-	180

Children.

Received into the Asylum	-	-	-	-	-	2
Placed out	-	-	-	-	-	1
Remaining in	-	-	-	-	-	9
Whole number supported since the institution of the Society						24
Whole number placed out	-	-	-	-	-	15

Widows' Fund.

Eight shares in Salem Bank	-	\$920
Five shares in Marine Stock	-	400
Notes of hand to the amount of	-	260
Invested in the Asylum House	-	137
		<hr/>
		\$1725

Children's Fund.

Invested in the Asylum House	-	\$1587
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Annual Income.

Amount of annual subscription	-	-	-	\$572
Donations from members	-	-	-	44
Collected after the annual sermon	-	-	-	142 15
Arising from the sale of sermons	-	-	-	10 60
Arising from the widows' fund	-	-	-	164 08
Arising from the children's fund	-	-	-	55 50
				<hr/>
				\$988 33

Expenditures.

As per accounts	-	-	\$726 33
Distributed among widows			146 33
			<hr/>
			\$842 66

Remaining in the Treasury.

Arising from the widows' fund	-	-	\$55
Arising to the Children	-	-	91
			<hr/>
			\$146

Donations in Goods.

From a lady, 1 piece of cotton. From another lady, 1 piece of silk.

*STATE OF THE SOCIETY AT THE CLOSE OF THE NINTH YEAR,
APRIL, 1809.*

New subscribers	-	5	Discontinued	-	-	4
Deceased	-	3	Whole number	-	-	173

Widows' Fund.

Eight shares in Salem Bank	-	-	\$920
Five shares in the Union Marine Office	-	-	400
One note of hand	-	-	300

Children's Fund.

Asylum House	-	-	\$1724
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Annual Income.

Amount of annual subscriptions	-	-	-	\$518
Donations from members	-	-	-	160
Collected at the public contribution	-	-	-	132
Arising from the widows' fund	-	-	-	120
From the children's fund	-	-	-	74 09
				<hr/>
				\$1004 09

Expenditures.

As per accounts	-	-	\$676 22
Distributed among widows			111
			<hr/>
			\$787 22

Remaining in the Treasury.

Belonging to the widows' fund	-	-	-	\$228
Arising to the children	-	-	-	53 48

In August, 1810, at a meeting of the Directresses and Managers, the Board were led to a consideration of the consequences which would result from a change in their mode of supporting the children under their care. They had hitherto boarded in the family of the Governess, at the sum of \$1,25, for each child, per week. After much deliberation, it was unanimously voted, to adopt as less expensive, the plan pursued by the Boston Female Asylum; to hire a Governess at the sum of one hundred dollars a year, who should reside in the house belonging to the Society, and be supplied with the means of comfortable subsistence for herself and the children, at the expense of the Society. The experience of five years has enabled the Managers to decide on the advantages of this change, and they have the satisfaction to state, that it has been productive of all the good which was anticipated, and that this diminution of their expenses has permitted them to extend the hand of charity to many children, who were exposed to all the evils of poverty and the contagion of vice.

STATE OF THE SOCIETY AT THE END OF THE NINTH YEAR, 1811.

Amount of annual subscription	-	-	-	\$546
Donations from members	-	-	-	54
Collected at the public meeting, in the Baptist Church	196	70		
Received through the Post-Office, a donation of		7		
Arising from the sale of the sermons	-	-		43 11
Received through the Post-Office, a donation of		50		
Received from a lady at Cambridge	-	-		50
				<u>\$946 81</u>

Expenses of the year, were	-	-	-	\$771 87
Interest arising from the widows' fund	-	-	-	176
Distributed among ninety four destitute widows				108
Remaining on hand	-	-	-	69

One child was received into the Asylum. Three members died and two discontinued their subscription. The whole number was 492

State of the Widows' Fund.

Eight shares in Salem Bank	-	-	\$920
Five ditto in Marine Stock	-	-	400
One note of hand, for	-	-	300
One ditto for	-	-	200
One ditto for	-	-	100
Remaining in the Treasury	-	-	28 85
			<u>\$1948 85</u>

STATE OF THE SOCIETY AT THE CLOSE OF THE TENTH YEAR,
MAY 5, 1812.

Amount of annual subscription	-	-	\$515
Collected at the anniversary meeting	-	-	108 47
Received from an unknown friend	-	-	10
Donations from members	-	-	42
Amount of the sale of the sermons	-	-	28 55
			<u>\$704 2</u>
Expenses of the year, as per bills	-	-	\$414 45
Distributed among forty destitute widows	-	-	117

Children's Fund.

Asylum House	-	-	\$1724
A note on interest	-	-	100
Remaining in the Treasury			60

Widows' Fund.

Eight shares in Salem Bank	-	-	\$920
Five ditto in Marine Stock	-	-	400
One note of hand for	-	-	300
One ditto	-	-	200
One ditto	-	-	100
One ditto	-	-	100
Interest arising, remaining in the Treasury			62

Five children were received into the Asylum, and two were placed at service during the year. Four members deceased and four discontinued their subscription, making the whole number - 184

STATE OF THE SOCIETY AT THE CLOSE OF THE ELEVENTH YEAR,
MAY 3, 1813.

New subscribers	-	2	Discontinued	-	9
Deceased	-	6	Whole number	-	163
Children received into the Asylum					4
Placed out at service					2
Remainning in the Asylum					14

Widows' Fund.

Eight shares in Salem Bank	-	\$920
Five shares in Marine Stock	-	400
Two notes of hand for \$100 each		200
One ditto fer	-	300
One ditto for	-	200
		<u>\$2020</u>

Children's Fund.

Asylum House	-	\$1724
One note of hand	-	100
Remaining in the Treasury		62 89

Annual Income.

Amount of annual subscription	-	-	\$515
Donations from members	-	-	27
Collected at the public meeting	-	-	122 39
Interest on widows' fund	-	-	48
Ditto on children's ditto	-	-	6
House rent	-	-	10 50
Light-stand, received for rent	-	-	5
			<u>\$733 89</u>

Expenditures.

For children	-	-	\$539 87
Distributed to widows	-	-	100
			<u>\$639 87</u>

Donations.

From a Lady, a piece of cotton. From another, 6 pieces of calico.
A patent washing machine, from Messrs. Swan and Marston.

STATE OF THE SOCIETY AT THE CLOSE OF THE TWELFTH YEAR.
MAR 4, 1814.

Amount of annual subscription	-	\$462
Donations from members	-	34
Collected after the annual sermon	-	111
Interest on widows' fund	-	111 50
Ditto on children's ditto	-	6
House rent	-	20

Expenditures.

For the children \$642 22 Distributed among widows \$104

Donations.

From a gentleman, 50 pounds of rice, for children.
From another gentleman, 400 pounds of ditto, for widows.
Presented by Messrs. Seccomb and Williams, a medicine chest, for
the use of the Asylum.

To support the subscription of a deceased member	60
For ditto	50
	<u>\$110</u>

STATE OF THE SOCIETY AT THE CLOSE OF THE THIRTEENTH
YEAR, MAY 1, 1815.

New subscribers	-	2	Discontinued	-	12
Deceased	-	7	Whole number	-	136
Children received into the Asylum					3
Placed at service	-	-			3
Remaining in	-	-			16
Amount of annual subscription	-	-			\$417
Donations from members	-	-			14
Collected at public meeting	-	-			165 41
Interest on widows' fund	-	-			43 33

Expenditures.

For the children	\$540 10	Distributed among widows	\$126 43
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Widows' Fund.

Eight shares in Salem Bank	-	-	\$920
Five ditto in Marine Stock	-	-	400
Three notes of hand, amounting to	-	-	500
Two Turnpike shares	-	-	400

Children's Fund.

Asylum House	\$1724	One Turnpike share	200
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Donations.

A piece of cotton, containing 18 yards from a lady.
 Two cords of peat, for the Asylum, from another lady.
 Twelve pounds of chocolate, from another female friend.

Since the commencement of the present year, ten members have been added, and two have deceased, leaving the present number one hundred and forty four. One child has been placed at service, and two have been received into the Asylum. Seventeen now remain under the protection of the Society. Fifty dollars have been received from the children of a deceased member, for the support of their mother's subscription; and at the public meeting, August 2, after divine service, \$136 were collected for the benefit of the institution. The Directresses and Managers would embrace this opportunity of returning their grateful acknowledgments to all the friends of their institution to whose liberality they have been indebted; they would particularly express their obligations to the gentleman, who so generously repaired the injury sustained at the Asylum House, by the late severe hail-storm; and to the physician, who since the year 1814, has so kindly and gratuitously attended the sick and infirm children under their care, and enabled *all* to enjoy, free of expense, the privilege of inoculation.

By order of the Directresses and Managers.

ELIZABETH G. DABNEY, *Secretary.*

Salem, August 17, 1815.



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